

The spirit of contradiction broke loose once more in a pugnative correspondence with Calvin. Calvin at first treated his insistent correspondent, who plied him with embarrassing questions on insuperable points of divinity-, with patience and courtesy. His patience was, however, limited at best, and his adamant orthodoxy would stand no nonsense. He became the inveterate enemy of the insistent Spaniard, on whom his logic and his learning could make no impression, and was determined to secure his destruction. "Servetus," wrote he to Farel in February 1546, "has lately written to me, and adjoined to his letter a long volume of his delirious fancies, with the Thrasonic boast that I should see stupendous and hitherto unheard-of things. He intimates his intention of coming hither, if I am agreeable. But I am unwilling to pledge my faith for his safety. For if he comes, and my authority avails anything, I shall never suffer him to depart alive."

Poor Servetus was as the fly buzzing around the gas jet. The tone of his letters increased in bitterness and abuse, and Calvin, from personal and theological reasons, was determined to make an example of him. If it cannot be proved that he was directly responsible for his persecution by the Inquisition at Vienne in 1553, it is certain that he furnished evidence against him to the inquisitors. Servetus escaped during the trial, but was condemned to be burned as a heretic, and the effigy of him was accordingly burned along with his book, the "Restitutio." By a fatal aberration he fled to Geneva, to incur at the hands of a Protestant Inquisition, directed by Calvin, the fate that the Roman Catholic Inquisition had just missed inflicting on him. It may be granted that the presence in Geneva of such an irrepressible controversialist and heretic was a menace to Calvin's supremacy, which had opponents enough in the Libertines. Granted, too, that Servetus was by no means judicious, and adopted a defiant attitude, on the strength apparently of the support of the Libertine party. But the right course was plain. Servetus was a stranger and was not amenable to the laws and discipline of the Geneva Church and State, and should at most have been expelled from the city as a dangerous incendiary. Instead of pursuing this course, the Council, at Calvin's instigation, arraigned him